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Press Release

Delaware to Send Refurbished Computers to Mississippi Schools Damaged by Hurricane Katrina

WILMINGTON - Delaware is reaching out to Mississippi school children affected by Hurricane Katrina.

Delaware's Department of Correction, Delaware's Department of Education, the Delaware Center for Educational Technology (DCET) and the Partners In Technology (ParTech) program have teamed up to clean and refurbish donated computer systems to be distributed to Mississippi schools damaged by Hurricane Katrina.

Inmates at the Howard R. Young Correctional Institution have refurbished 200 computers under the joint DOC and DOE program *"Computers for Classrooms."* These computers, donated by private industry and state agencies in Delaware, will be shipped to five school districts along the Gulf Coast that were hardest hit by Hurricane Katrina.

Today, inmate-technicians refurbished the final 15 units. The DOE is scheduled to pick up all 200 units tomorrow and is in the process of arranging shipment of the computers to Mississippi.

Shortly after the hurricane hit, the Departments of Correction and Education began discussing the idea of donating computers to Mississippi.

"There is nothing more important than preparing young people for a successful future," said Dr. Wayne Hartschuh, Executive Director, Delaware Center for Educational Technology, "With lives and communities being permanently altered by the devastation from Hurricane Katrina, we are pleased to be able to support recovery efforts, not only from the individual student and teacher perspective, but also from the school and community perspective."

Since 2000, the two state agencies have been partnering on the *"Computers for Classrooms"* program.

In the program, the Department of Education locates used computers from state agencies, businesses and organizations across the state. Inmates at HRYCI, supervised by a computer specialist, then refurbish the worn units. When the recycling work is complete, the Department of Education determines which public and charter schools will receive the computers. Extra units are donated to non-profit groups, including youth organizations and senior centers.

Since the program began, inmates have refurbished 5,810 computers. The Department of Education has placed recycled units in 33 schools across Delaware, in 14 of 19 school districts and in schools in all three counties. 90% of the recycled units are placed in Delaware schools. The rest are donated to non-profits.

"This is a great example of state government working productively and efficiently for the betterment of its citizens," said Ron Parrott, DOC computer specialist. "This project gives prison inmates valuable vocational training and helps them feel connected to the community – at the same time placing more computers at the fingertips of our school children. It is even more satisfying for the Department and the inmates to know that school children in need in Mississippi are also benefiting from this work"